

The Success of LSAT Retakes

An informal survey

Background

The mantra on various internet forums for law school admissions is to retake, retake, retake. I wanted to see if it was, actually, accurate advice supported by demonstrated change. I circulated a survey in google forms on reddit and top-law-schools.com for two weeks in February and then used excel to find medians and other patterns. The survey was informal, as is the analysis. The data is supplied by anonymous users who may not have given accurate data. Data may also be skewed due to self-selection of both individuals who choose to fill out the survey and individuals who choose to participate in law school forums. The results have not gone through the sort of rigorous proof reading, cross checking, or structure that a formal survey would and errors may have been made.

- 130 people responded, 4 of which were removed from the data due to not having actually retaken the test, leaving 126 individuals.
- The respondents were largely male (73%), whereas actual LSAT takers tend to be [more evenly split](#) (slightly skewing male). [Pew Research Center](#) found that “Young males are especially likely to use reddit” (2013), making this discrepancy in line with the method of survey advertisement.
- Only 6% of respondents identified as URM.
- 73% of respondents were between 18-24 when they took the test. The remainder were all older.

The survey generally found that **the vast majority of people who chose to retake the LSAT saw an improvement between retakes.**

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Changes Between Retakes

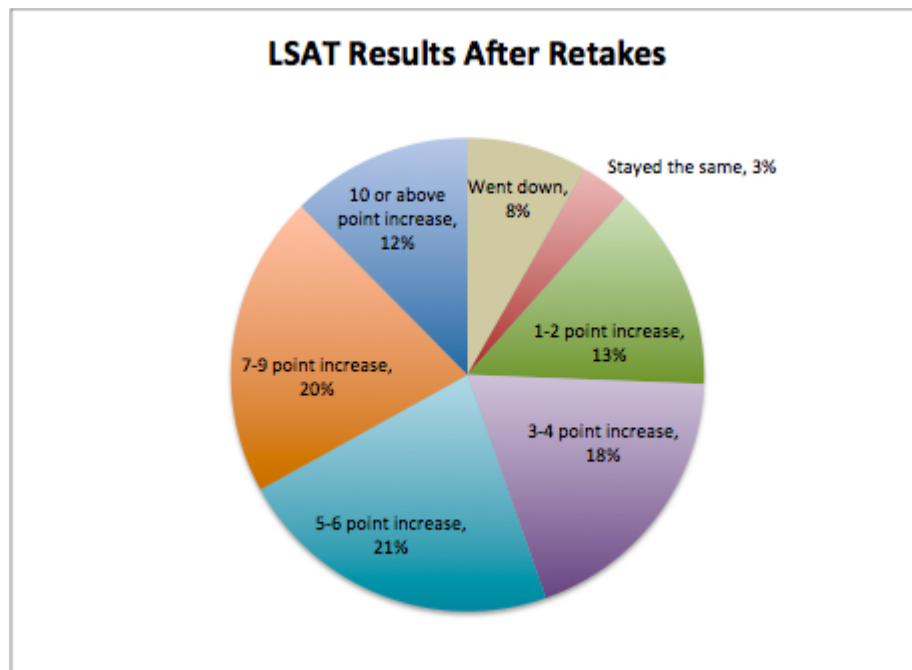
What was the median increase?

Between First and Second Takes

The median increase between the first and second LSAT score was 5 points. 11% of respondents went down or stayed the same between their first and second score, and 10% of respondents increased 10 or more points between their first and second score.

Between Second and Third Takes

11% of respondents took the test a third time, and **the median increase between their second and third score was 4 points**, with a median change between their first and third score of 8 points. Only 7% of respondents who took the test a third time saw their score go down or stay the same. Only 2% of respondents who took the test a third time saw their score increase 10 or more points between their second and third score.



The above chart is the difference between the first score and the final score after retakes.

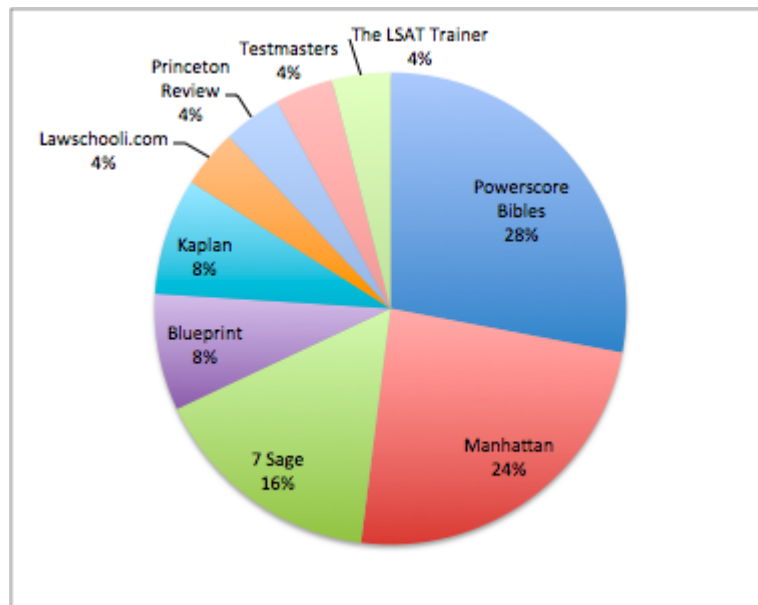
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What about the people with the biggest increase?

Time did not seem to be a significant factor in their success. The time studied between retakes ranged from 2 months to 5 months. While all the individuals with the highest increase between LSATs studied at least 2 hours a day for their second or third time taking the test (and in some cases as high as 8 hours), individuals outside of this group also studied these amounts daily.

Individuals with the biggest increases used the following study methods, often more than one at a time:



What was the difference between the final score and the diagnostic?

- The median change between the diagnostic and the final score was 11.
- 7% saw no change, or a negative change, between their diagnostic and their final score.
- 20% saw a change of 15 points or greater.
- Diagnostics may not have been done in a completely simulated test condition, which could impact these results.

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If you did not meet your goal, you are not alone.

Only 15% of all respondents met or exceeded the goal they set themselves.

What did respondents say they would have done differently?

Several respondents said they would have taken more practice tests.

Others said that they wish they had taken longer to study, and cited things like full time work and athletic training as distractions.

A few expressed regret about not trusting their instincts and changing answers on the test.

More than one person regretted drinking the night before.